

ADJECTIVES IN ARCHITECTURAL VISUAL CONCEPTS



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“Good interior design adds a new dimension to a space. It can increase our efficiency in the way we go about our daily lives, and it adds depth, understanding, and meaning to the built environment. Thoughtful and well-crafted design makes a space easier to understand, and experiencing such a space lifts the spirit, too. It is, therefore, not just about the aesthetic but it is a practical and philosophical discipline.”

The Fundamentals of Interior Design-Simon Dodsworth, and Stephen Anderson

Summary

As the complexity and quality of interiors and their hyphenation with the modern, trendier, data analytical or image analytical improves, there is increasing interest in annotating images with linguistic descriptions ranging from single words describing the depicted objects and their properties to richer expressions such as full-fledged image captions. This trend has generated wide interest in linguistic annotations beyond concrete nouns, with the role of adjectives in image descriptions receiving, in particular, much attention. This paper analyses the role of adjectives in the architectural Interiors phenomena.

Introduction: *Adjective* comes from Latin *nōmen adjectīvum*, or the Greek 'additional noun'. In the grammatical tradition of Latin and Greek, because adjectives were inflected for gender, number, and case like nouns (a process called declension), they were considered a type of noun. The words that are today typically called nouns were then called *substantive nouns*. The terms *noun substantive* and *noun*

adjective were formerly used in English but are now obsolete. An adjective modifies a noun; that is, it provides more detail about a noun. This can be anything from colour to size to temperature to personality. Adjectives usually occur just before the nouns they modify. In the following examples, adjectives are in bold, while the nouns they modify are in italics (the big *bear*):

- The generator is used to convert mechanical *energy* into electrical *energy*.
- The steel *pipes* contain a protective sacrificial *anode* and are surrounded by packing *material*.

Adjectives can also follow a linking verb. In these instances, adjectives can modify pronouns as well. In the following examples, adjectives are still bold, while the linking verb is in italics this time (the sun *is* yellow);

- The schoolhouse *was* red.
- I *looked* good today.
- She *was* funny.

Numbers can also be adjectives in some cases. When you say “Seven is my lucky number,” *seven* is a noun, but when you say “There are seven cats in this painting,” *seven* is an adjective because it is modifying the noun *cats*.

Adjectives are of special interest today in the design space because of their central role in so-called attribute-centric image representations. This framework views objects as bundles of properties, or attributes, commonly expressed by adjectives (e.g., homely, cool, even contemporary), and uses the latter as features to learn higher-level, semantically richer representations of objects. Attribute-based methods achieve better generalization of object classifiers with less data, while at the same time producing semantic representations of visual concepts that more accurately model human sentiments. (For instance- The client says, for a room “I want a homely feeling”). It is possible to create a visual concept by process rather than by inspiration. The technique is to select two or three adjectives from the brief that summarize the experience the client wants from the space. This may be easier than you imagine. The clients will often use words such as sanctuary, warmth, Urban, natural, and the like when referring to the feelings they want your design to generate, particularly when dealing with a residential project.

Creating Design from Adjectives: If the client doesn’t have clearly established brand guidelines or is looking to change their visual language this could be a difficult or thorny task. Something can be aesthetically pleasing while communicating the wrong message. How then do we correlate between the emotions and the design attributes? One could ask the client directly, “What should this communicate

and how should it look and feel?” Unfortunately, this rarely produces the right insights. Not everyone has the experience and training to answer that question, and more often than not responses refer to personal preferences rather than the best fit- personal preferences can hinder design nuances and reversing actual outcomes. However, it is true that having a conversation is a good starting point, and the most efficient questions will solicit the role of design adjectives.

Was it not Saint Laurent of YSL fame who said that “*It is my soul; I was not so happy at first. I never wanted to do a retrospective, and it ended up like that.*” In doing so one can search for images that are strongly suggestive of these adjectives, and create a single unified collage. Generally, you will collect many images and edit them down to those that best illustrate the theory adjectives you have chosen the best imagery to use will be abstract rather than literal, as abstract imagery creates strong but flexible visual concepts. But literal images stop the imagination from working and may produce weaker concepts.

Comparisons are even more valuable. “Should this feel progressive or conservative?” Now stakeholders will not only have to think about what feeling the design should invoke, but also what feeling it *shouldn’t* invoke. Again, understanding the “why” to this question is equally if not more important than the answer itself. Some adjectives are in fact comparable. For example, a person may be polite, but another person may be more polite, and a third person may be the politest of the three. The word *more* here modifies the adjective *polite* to indicate a comparison is being made (a comparative), and *most* modifies the adjective to indicate an absolute comparison (a superlative).

There is another way to compare adjectives in English. Many adjectives can take the suffixes *-er* and *-est* (sometimes requiring additional letters before the suffix; see forms for *far* below) to indicate the comparative and superlative forms, respectively:

great, greater, greatest
deep, deeper, deepest
far, farther, farthest

Some adjectives are *irregular* in this sense:

good, better, best
bad, worse, worst
little, less, least

Another way to convey comparison is by incorporating the words *more* and *most*. There is no simple rule to decide which means is correct for any given adjective, however. The general tendency is for shorter adjectives to take the suffixes, while longer adjectives do not—but sometimes *sound* of the word is the deciding factor.

more beautiful not beautifuller
more pretentious not pretentiouser

While there is no perfect rule to determine which adjectives will or won't take *-er* and *-est* suffixes, this video lays out some "sound rules" that can serve as helpful guidelines:

Characteristics are more effective descriptors. For example, *fun* is a characteristic, a personality trait. We can both imagine someone who's fun, and while you and I will picture different people the interpretation invokes the same feeling. *Clean*; however, is a descriptor, and you and I will likely have very different interpretations of what a clean design looks like.

With that narrowed down, we've found the following design adjectives most useful in a wide range of use cases (note: we didn't invent this list, we've just found it to be effective):

- Conservative
- Progressive
- Warm
- Cold
- Fun
- Serious
- Casual
- Formal
- Energetic
- Laid Back
- Trendy
- Classic
- Spontaneous
- Orderly
- Solitary
- Popular
- Unique
- Familiar
- Young
- Old

Exploring Look and Feel with Design Adjectives

A productive client discussion about how the organization wants the design (to be perceived) and how the target audience would feel about the perception might begin with questions like, "Ought this feel advanced? Why or why not?"

Many designers ask stakeholders to compare near opposites, and while it is effective there is indeed a sticking point—it is very easy to interpret the adjectives as extremes. Now you're probably wondering what design adjectives should I use? On a scale of 1 to 5 could be further useful.

These conversations can be our suggested starting points and finding the absolute best fit doesn't stop with having similar conversations with members of the target audience and running design tests with early concepts to validate your approach is having the impact you desire.

Finally, these few images will be further edited to produce a collage in which each image tells its own story and moulds with the others to create a single composition, thus reflecting the story that the client wants the space to tell. Once you have created the concept, the images can be read to give direction for the decorative scheme. The structure, colour, form, and style from the concept can all be echoed in the finishes one selects imagining the completed scheme with the same sensory experience as the concept. As the complexity and quality of interiors and their hyphenation with the modern, trendier, data analytical or image analytical improves, there is increasing interest in annotating images with linguistic descriptions ranging from single words describing the depicted objects and their properties to richer expressions such as full-fledged image captions. This trend has generated wide interest in linguistic annotations beyond concrete nouns, with the role of adjectives in image descriptions receiving, in particular, much attention